

Testimony for Indian Affairs Committee hearing
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Chairman Inouye and Members of the Committee, thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Portland State University Institute for Tribal Government. I am honored to have been invited and am extremely pleased to see Chairman Inouye once again. I look forward to working with all of you on this exciting and timely opportunity to serve Native American higher education.

I would like to begin by describing the Institute and its background. The Institute for Tribal Government is located in the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. It is a truly unique program offered to elected tribal governments from across the nation.

Need for the Institute

While there are over 500 tribal governments in the United States, each with its own structure, there is no national institution that provides training specifically designed for elected tribal officials. Newly elected officials, in particular, often are unfamiliar with the duties of office and must assume multiple responsibilities without the benefit of structured training. The program's primary purpose, therefore, is to provide tribal elected officials with the education and training necessary to enhance their collective and individual leadership effectiveness.

I have always been impressed with the tireless efforts of tribes--- frequently small, impoverished tribes with limited financial and communication resources---to deal with the ever-increasing myriad of complex local, state and federal government jurisdictions tribes encounter on a daily basis. However, it is painfully clear that too often tribes lack the expertise and educational resources necessary to effectively deal with these inter-governmental challenges. This often leads to mistrust of tribal government by tribal members, resulting in tribal community instability. Externally in the non-tribal community, tribal credibility may be undermined by such events. Furthermore, precious tribal resources may be wasted or economic or other opportunities missed because of a lack of training or expertise.

As a member of Congress from 1993 to 1999 and in my 30 years experience working with tribes, it has always been my observation that tribal elected leaders themselves are the most articulate and effective representatives of their tribal communities. However, too often tribes believe that they must rely on "outside" consultants, who are frequently hired at great expense, to deal with subjects such as

inter-governmental relations or public awareness on behalf of a tribe. And typically, such experts are not tribal members and are not the most effective or compelling spokespersons for a tribe's interests. A primary goal of the Institute for Tribal Government, therefore, is to build capacity within tribes to do this vital work themselves.

When I was first elected to the Congress, all members of the newly elected freshman class were sent to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for a weeklong session on governance. There we learned about our duties and responsibilities as elected leaders and we learned how the legislative process works. That experience with my peers was of tremendous value to me. It was that experience which was the impetus for me to seek the establishment of the Institute for Tribal Government at Portland State University's Hatfield School of Government.

The Origin of the Institute

The work of establishing the Institute began one year ago with an initial meeting of tribal elected officials, Senator Mark O. Hatfield, PSU Dean Nohad Toulon, and myself. We have come a long way in that short time. We have established a Tribal Advisory Board, drawn from noted tribal leaders from across the nation; a Tribal Leadership Archive project, and a curriculum and classroom educational program for tribal elected leaders.

I must make special mention of Senator Hatfield. It was with Senator Mark Hatfield's invaluable guidance and vision that the Institute for Tribal Government was established. Senator Hatfield provides on-going assistance and guidance to the Institute as an honored member of our Tribal Advisory Board. He provides an on-campus presence for the tribes who enter the Institute program and he has continued his legacy of generously contributing his experience and mentoring capabilities to tribal peoples. It is with great respect and admiration that we thank the Senator for his continuing support.

I would also like to thank all of the members of the Oregon delegation, especially Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden, for their tremendous help in successfully funding the Institute in last year's Department of Education appropriations conference report. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Herbert Kohl of Wisconsin for his efforts on behalf of the University.

The Institute is particularly grateful for the creative and tireless support of the tribes and the Native American community. The Institute reflects the vision and wisdom of many tribal leaders and educators. As we grow in the years ahead, the Institute will rely upon their continued guidance and trust.

The Tribal Advisory Board

Perhaps the most unique and quintessential component of the Institute for Tribal Government is its Tribal Advisory Board. The Board has national representation and is composed of the elected

chairpersons of tribes, intertribal organizations, and representatives of tribal institutions of higher learning. The Board has actively guided the creation of the Institute, its curriculum and its various program elements.

In addition to the tribal Board members, Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Portland State University President Daniel Bernstine, and Dean Nohad Toulon of the College of Urban and Public Affairs serve as advisors to the Board. It is an extraordinarily creative and energetic group and I am very proud of the many accomplishments it has achieved in its short existence. The Tribal Advisory Board will continue its unique role as the primary policy-making body of the Institute. It will be relied upon to guide the program, the curriculum and will set the future goals for the Institute for Tribal Government.

The Institute Teaching Program

The Institute and its curriculum are designed to serve the needs of elected tribal governments. The core curriculum for the Institute program includes: overview of federal Indian law, history, and policy; the governmental duties and responsibilities of tribes as sovereign governments; practical information on federal legislative, judicial and executive government processes; jurisdiction; studies involving state and tribal relations, and analysis of effective leadership strategies. Additional subjects can be added, depending on the needs identified by a participating tribe. For example, additional topics might include natural resources, or other unique issues with which a tribal government is involved.

This comprehensive academic program is offered to individual tribal governments in an intensive 3-day classroom experience, typically held at the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. In instances where there are very large tribal government bodies, as in the case of our upcoming class for the 88-member Navajo Nation Tribal Council in early July, the class will travel to the vicinity of the enrolled tribe. These locally held classes are a cost-saving measure for tribes and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Instructors for Institute classes range from law school faculty members specializing in federal Indian law, to experts in Congressional legislative and appropriations processes, authorities on state-tribal relations, former members of Congress and state legislatures, and recognized tribal leaders.

The Leadership Archive Project

In addition to the academic curriculum, the Tribal Advisory Board has identified an urgent need to establish a Tribal Leadership Archive. This project is of great importance to the Board, since many contemporary tribal leaders are elderly and their leadership histories have never been adequately documented. With this project, the oral histories of nationally recognized tribal leaders will be documented on videotape and will be used as a teaching resource in our classes, and will be a resource to other students. The project will focus on national tribal leaders who have been engaged in efforts to

educate and heighten awareness of tribal sovereignty. Six oral histories will be conducted this year and will include Billy Frank of the Nisqually Tribe, Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee, Kathryn Harrison, Chair of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, among other national tribal leaders. The work will be preserved at the Oregon Historical Society. In future years, we plan to conduct 12 interviews annually. The Tribal Advisory Board will select candidates and guide this project. This effort promises to become an invaluable historical record of leadership involving tribal leaders from across the country.

Funding

Funding for the Institute has been provided by a combination of tribes, private foundations, the U.S. Department of Education, the Administration for Native Americans, and the Bonneville Power Administration. In addition to basic institutional and programmatic support we have secured funding from the Administration for Native Americans for scholarships in years 2001-2002. These monies are being used on a case-by-case basis and will help defray the costs for tribes participating in the course. Tribal tuition will pay for instructors, course materials and related expenses. Tuition is being determined on an individual tribal basis.

For the Tribal Leadership Archive program, the Spirit Mountain Foundation has contributed a start up challenge grant. Future fund-raising efforts will be aimed at providing sufficient funds to conduct approximately 12 video-recorded interviews per year.

What we have planned for this year

After several months of planning last year, we formally launched the Institute in early April of this year and were honored to offer our first class to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in mid-April.

To date, we have scheduled the following additional classes for the 2001 year: the Navajo Nation in July; a joint session with several Columbia River basin tribes in early August; the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs of Oregon in late August; the Alaska Inter-tribal Council in October in Anchorage, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho in November.

Additionally, we have commitments for classes from several more tribes before the end of the year and are working on scheduling with them for classes during July, November and December. Last but not least, we will be offering training to the employees of the Bonneville Power Administration, an agency that has been increasingly involved with the 13 Columbia River basin tribes in issues ranging from salmon and wildlife restoration efforts, to treaty Indian fishing rights, cultural resources, and energy development.

The Future

The Institute will operate year-round and will be offering approximately one class per month over the

course of the next 3 years. We have received tremendous interest in the program from tribes, and anticipate that our schedule will be busy indeed. What makes us unique is that the tribes design their own programs and each is different – depending on tribal needs and interests. We offer customized programs. I believe that this experience and contact with tribal leaders will lead to new insights about the needs of tribes. I look forward to sharing these insights with you over the coming years.

The Tribal Advisory Board is eager to expand its role by creating a national forum where existing and emerging policies can be analyzed and addressed by tribal governments. We are exploring this exciting idea as an opportunity for tribes to substantively address issues that are important to their culture, economies, and well-being.

In addition to tribal education programs there is increasing interest in training federal, state and local agencies with regard to the unique status of tribal governments and inter-governmental relationships. We hope to expand this effort as a means to help promote lines of communication and understanding between communities and sovereign governments.

Mr. Chairman, you may also be interested in a related effort we are supporting which is the construction of a Native American community center and longhouse on the campus of Portland State University. Planning and fund-raising for this facility is well underway, led in part by the PSU student body. The Center promises to provide an ideal setting for tribal leaders to meet and learn in a culturally sensitive setting that encourages interaction between tribal leaders, Native American students and other students. Some of the classes of the Institute for Tribal Government will be held at this facility when it is constructed in 2002 and 2003.

Collaboration with Other Institutions

With guidance from the Tribal Advisory Board, the Institute for Tribal Government was founded on the principle that it will actively work with tribal colleges and other tribally oriented institutions of higher education. In that regard, we will continue to work with institutions such as the Morris F. Udall Foundation, The Harvard Project on Native American Economic Development at the Kennedy School of Government, the Evergreen State College Northwest Applied Research Institute, the Lewis and Clark Law School, the University of Colorado Law School, and the Native American Rights Fund. Each of these institutions has directly contributed to our program by giving invaluable guidance on curriculum development and other aspects related to formation of the Institute for Tribal Government. Representatives of several of these programs also serve on our Tribal Advisory Board in order to foster communication and awareness.

We will continue to seek out other educational institutions with which we can associate. This will create an avenue by which tribal leaders and students can be referred to academic programs at Portland State

University and other institutions in order to further their education in areas such as Tribal Administration, law, economic development, and governance. We are particularly proud of this effort to maintain a collaborative and . mutually beneficial relationship with these other institutions.

We have moved very quickly this past year to make the Institute a reality. But we have an unfinished agenda and still have a long way to go. The Institute has skeleton funding for approximately 3 years, but we need to establish a more permanent funding base in order to give maximum attention to our service programs. Since requests for our programs are growing rapidly, we must secure additional resources from the public and private sectors in order for us to fulfill that demand.

I am pleased to provide you with this update of our progress, and look forward to keeping you apprised of our success in the years ahead. Once again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify, and trust that you will not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to the Committee or its distinguished members.

Portland State University: A Commitment to the Native American Community

- Employs a **Native American student advisor** who assists with enrollment, guidance and support for Native American students at P.S.U.
- Acts as a host of the **American Indian Science and Engineering Society and United Indian Students in Higher Education**
- Provides scholarship assistance for Native American students through the **Jean Vollum American Indian Scholarship**
- Provides distance learning services to the Grand Ronde, Umatilla and Siletz tribes through the Professional Development Center's **Tribal Administration Program**
- Developing a **Native American Studies Certificate Program** through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Operates **The Institute for Tribal Government** at the Hatfield School of Government, offering leadership classes and other educational resources to tribes throughout the nation
- Oversees the **Tribal Leadership Archive Project**, which involves interviewing and videotaping selected tribal leaders who have had significant impact on regional and national issues across Indian country
- Developing the **Native American Student Community Center** to provide a place for Native American students to share their values and culture
- Offers the **First American Education Series**, providing seminars about American Indians taught by American Indians
- Created the **Advancing Cross-cultural Education Skills (ACES) program**, a partnership with the University of Texas and Northwest Indian College (NWIC) to teach technology skills to NWIC faculty and preservice teachers
- Sponsored a symposium in March on "**Current Native American Issues in the Columbia River Basin**" attended by approximately 200 people
- Serves Native American children and families through the Child Welfare Partnership, including

a Tribal representative on the "**Supervising for Excellence Steering Committee**"

- Requires students to carry out a senior-year capstone project for graduation; a number of capstone projects have focused on **Native American history and culture**: Chemawa Indian School Project, Environmental Education through Native American Lenses, Salmon Corps and the History of Indian Fishing Rights in the Pacific Northwest
- Offers a Master of Public Administration degree with a **specialty in Tribal Administration**, directed by a **Native American Associate Professor**
- Offers college courses that focus on Columbia River Basin studies to **Salmon Corps students at the Umatilla Indian Reservation**
- **Employs a Native American Assistant Professor** in the School of Urban Studies & Planning who specializes in Native American art, literature, and cultural studies
- Employs a **Native American Associate Professor** in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences who specializes in Native American literature